

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T AMMAN 8236

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, JO,XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH HUSSEIN--AREA SITUATION

1. I HAVE JUST COME FROM A LONG MEETING WITH THE KING. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS WITH ALL THE DETAILS OF HIS RECENT VISITS TO AREA CAPITALS. IN EFFECT, HE BELIEVES HE HAS MOVED THE OTHER ARAB LEADERS CLOSER TO GENEVA. THE PROCESS WHICH HE FEELS MUST BE FOLLOWED IS A SUMMIT MEETING OF EGYPT AND SYRIA, WITH JORDAN, THE PLO AND PROBABLY SAUDI ARABIA IN ATTENDANCE. ASAD WAS FIRM AND DIFFICULT, BUT IS PERSUADED THAT IF ARABS CAN AGREE ON SUBSTANCE AND ALSO ON THE FACT THAT THERE WILL BE NO SEPARATE DEALS HE IS LIKELY TO COME TO GENEVA. SADAT IS HARDER AND LEFT KING WITH STRONG IMPRESSION THAT HE WANTS TO RETAIN MAXIMUM FREEDOM OF ACTION TO WORK OUT A SEPARATE ARRANGEMENT WITH THE ISRAELIS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IF SYRIA BLOCKS PROGRESS TOWARD GENEVA. KING IS OBVIOUSLY UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE CENTER.

2. KING SAYS HE BELIEVES SAUDIS ARE RECEPTIVE TO HIS PUSH FOR A SUMMIT WHERE POSITIONS ON SUBSTANCE

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COULD BE WORKED OUT AND WHERE ARABS WOULD MAKE A COMMITMENT TO STICK TOGETHER. HE IS WRITING KING KHALID TO SEE IF SAUDIS WILL PUSH FORWARD ON GETTING SADAT AND ASAD TO MEET. SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN DIFFERENCES ARE MAINLY PERSONAL AND NOT SUBSTANTIVE. HOWEVER, THEY SEEM COMPLETELY TO HAVE ECLIPSED. THE ARAB CONTINUING FOCUS ON THE PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS MADE

IN THE PRESIDENT'S LAST LETTER TO ARAB HEADS OF STATE. KING DOES NOT BELIEVE OUR IDEAS WILL RECEIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION UNTIL ARABS CAN GET TOGETHER. IF THEY DO, HE IS REASONABLY HOPEFUL THAT WITH SAUDI HELP, POSITION CAN BE WORKED OUT WHICH WILL OPEN THE WAY.

3. CURRENTLY HE IS EXHAUSTED FROM HAVING BEEN THE SURROGATE TARGET IN ASAD'S PRESENCE FOR ATTACKS AGAINST SADAT AND VICE VERSA.

4. FROM WHAT KING HAS TOLD ME, PRINCIPAL STUMBLING BLOCK FOR THE MOMENT SEEMS TO BE INTER-ARAB SQUABBLING, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN DANGEROUS GROUND FOR US TO TREAD ON. HOWEVER, IDEA OF SAUDIS GETTING MAJOR PARTIES TOGETHER IS PROBABLY A GOOD ONE AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SOUNDING OUT SAUDIS FURTHER AND REINFORCING KING'S SUGGESTION TO THEM THAT THEIR PUSH IS NEEDED TO BRING ABOUT THE NECESSARY MEETING LEADING TO FURTHER COORDINATION. ASAD AND KING DO NOT PLAN TO RESPOND TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER FOR THE MOMENT. PICKERING

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